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REGIONE AUTÓNOMA DE SARDIGNA
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Archaeological area of Tharros

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Plate in South-Gaulish Samian ware style

In the 1st century A.D, Southern France experienced a surge in pottery workshops that imitated the Italic red gloss “sigillata” ware, initially made in Arezzo and then in Pisa.

These workshops made items for the continental European market, and only products from the La Graufesenque group, near the current town of Milau, were also distributed around the Mediterranean (fig. 1).



Fig. 1 - Diffusion of products from the workshops of La Graufesenque (shown in red)
(from BEMONT, JACOB 1986, p. 102)

In the 40s and 70s/80s of the vulgar age, an unusual system of decoration was used for vases, no longer covered with shiny red paint but with a “marbled” appearance, where the red and yellow merged intricately.

The aim of this new product that was made for about a generation and then was completely abandoned, is not fully clear. It is presumed the effect was derived accidentally from a problem in firing in a kiln, and then continued deliberately.

The plate, that probably comes from a tomb given its excellent state of preservation (figs. 2-4) is an excellent example of marbled pottery. It has a simple, functional shape, with a low base, a short oblique wall, and the flat bowl, that is raised internally in the centre, where the illegible manufacturer's stamp can be seen.



Fig. 2 - South-Gaulish marbled Samian ware (Oristano, *Antiquarium Arboreense*) (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)



Fig. 3 - South-Gaulish marbled Samian ware (Oristano, *Antiquarium Arboreense*) (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)





Fig. 4 - South-Gaulish marbled Samian ware (Oristano, *Antiquarium Arborensis*) (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)

The shape of the vase is canonical, for both Italic red gloss sigillata ware and south-Gaulish samian ware and is off the Dragendorff type 18 (fig. 5).

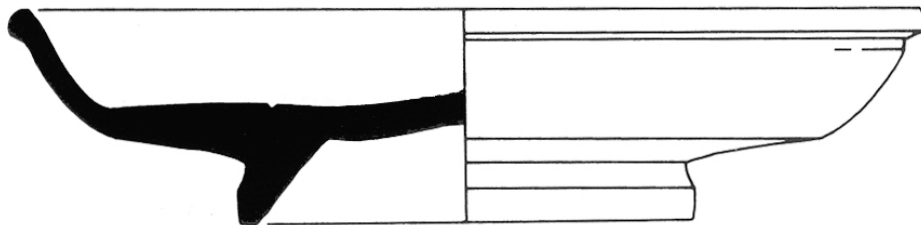


Fig. 5 - Plate in South-Gaulish marbled Dragendorff samian ware 18, from the Agorà of Athens (from HAYES 2008, fig. 23, 743)

In Sardinia, the south Gaulish samian area in general and therefore the marbled ware was rather diffused (even if not shown in the map in figure 1, not updated with the most recent data) and mainly characterised the levels of life in the second half of the 1st and the first decades of the 2nd century A.D.



■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Carlo Tronchetti

■ Bibliography

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Progetto cofinanziato dall'Unione Europea
Programma Operativo FESR 2007-2013

FESR - Fondo Europeo di Sviluppo Regionale - Asse I, Linea di Attività 1.2.3.a